286 not equally skillful, but some of them know how to weave cloth which is fine, tightly woven, and quite strong. Sewn together and cut according to unchanging patterns, these strips are made into breechcloths, trousers, wide shirts, full robes which cover the whole body, and especially men's and women's blankets, white or dark blue, which are an indispensable protection against the cold and which are worn wrapped around the body. Mossi fabrics are quite well-known in neighboring territories, and as we shall see they are an important trade item.

386 It is customary to dye the garments after they are made or the thread before it is woven. The dyer's trade is quite widespread in Mossi country, and there is no important /56/ village without dyers. They get together to dig their wells in the same spot; often choosing a small hillock for the purpose where they sink about ten wells, two or three meters deep, the inner surface baked with a charcoal fire. The dyeing solutions are poured into these wells, and the clothes or thread to be dyed are immersed in the liquid and stirred with sticks that have at the end pieces of wood set in the shape of a cross. Fabrics are left soaking for varying periods of time depending on their bulk, and then they are spread out in the sun to dry. The colors obtained vary from a very dark blue, nearly black, to light blue. Certain clothes are dyed sienna, a color favored by hunters because it is dark. Several washings are needed to remove the strong odor which permeates cloth dyed in this fashion, but each washing removes part of the dye.

285 Everyone knows how to weave, and almost everyone knows how to make basketry. When the grass is full grown, the children have fun making straw hats, some of which are not badly done; others make containers in various patterns by mixing yellow and black straws, and red ones dyed with the leaves of a variety of millet, cultivated in order to obtain the red shade desired for coloring leather; yet others plait simple trays of straw which are used to cover the gourds or to carry meat.

294 Those who are skillful make sturdy hats adorned with leather figures, and this becomes a veritable industry. There are two main kinds of hats: those shaped like pointed cones, and the bell-shaped hats with a wide brim. They are so ample that they can easily be worn over a cap which is sometimes wrapped in a strip of soft fabric. A leather [284] strap with a sliding knot holds the hat in place or permits it to hang down one's back with the cord holding it at the neck. Saponé is the manufacturing center for hats.

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the
[435] soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

284 Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
291 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.